

A Part of Me by MaryannJarvey

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Abandoned Work - Unfinished and Discontinued, Angst with a Happy Ending, Drama & Romance, Eventual Sex, F/M, Fluff and Angst, Gen, I just love them, Jancy, My First Work in This Fandom, Post-Season/Series 01 Finale, Romance, Slow Build, Slow Burn, Song Lyrics, Steve won't be a bad guy though, Time Skips

Language: English

Characters: Demogorgon (Stranger Things), Dustin Henderson, Eleven (Stranger Things), Jim "Chief" Hopper, Jonathan Byers, Joyce Byers, Lonnie Byers, Lucas Sinclair, Mike Wheeler, Nancy Wheeler, Original Female Character(s), Steve Harrington, Will Byers

Relationships: Eleven/Mike Wheeler, Jonathan Byers & Nancy Wheeler, Jonathan Byers/Nancy Wheeler, Joyce Byers/Jim "Chief" Hopper, Steve Harrington/Nancy Wheeler

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Summary:

Jonathan looked at her as if he were enjoying the last days of summer, the first flakes of a snowstorm, or a breakthrough of sunshine after a thunderstorm.

1. Graduation

*I like her 'cause she's smart, headstrong and independent,
She puts me in my place, but I don't know where I stand,
And if only I could find the words, or muster up the nerve to tell her
I'll never forget her
And she'll always have a part of me.*

There was a quiet rustling. Both Jonathan and Nancy jumped slightly at the noise, examining the living room they were sitting in. Jonathan took note of all of the lights, silently making sure that they were silent.

"Did you hear that?" Nancy asked. Her eyes were wide, afraid. She was ready to take on the monster. Ready to come face to face with what had taken her best friend. Show that stupid thing a piece of her mind. She thought she was ready at least.

Jonathan turned to look back at her. "It's just the wind," he replied softly. "Don't worry. My mom, she said the lights 'speak' when it comes." He realized how crazy those words sounded even though he was aware of what his mother meant. He had experienced the speaking lights first hand, had seen his mother get so invested in them that she had painted the alphabet on their walls. Jonathan wondered where she was right now, hoping she was far away from the home he and Nancy were getting ready to practically destroy.

"Speak?" Nancy asked. Jonathan thought for a second on how to explain what the "speaking" was. It was hard to describe without actually seeing it. He knew his mother had heard Will's voice within those blinks.

"Blink. Think of them as... Alarms." His attention was drawn to the hand Nancy was currently wrapping. He had known that the cut was going to hurt, both of them did, but feeling the hydrogen peroxide Nancy had put onto the paper towel to clean off the wounds was much worse than he had thought. Nancy paused in her wrapping to quietly ask, "Is that too tight?" Jonathan shook his head. "No, no it's fine. Thanks." He was about to look up again when he saw Nancy's hand reaching closer to his, her fingers slightly wrapping around his own. When he looked up, Jonathan caught Nancy's eye. "Nancy?"

She remained silent for a second before slowly leaning forward to capture his lips. Jonathan wondered for a second if she had intended for this to be a mere kiss on the cheek but when she didn't jump away at their lips touching, he realized she had placed herself exactly where she wanted to be. His knowledge on anything like this stemmed only from one game of spin the bottle when he was Will's age and then some movies he watched with his mother. He pushed himself closer to her, wracking his brain for anything he could work with, anything that could--.

"Jonathan?" Pounding on the door forced the pair to pull apart, slightly bumping heads as they did. "Are you there man? It's-It's Steve. Listen, I wanna talk!" Soon the panic of getting caught turned into a panic of Steve getting caught up in something so horrible that neither Jonathan nor Nancy would wish upon their worst enemy...

The three of them sat quietly in the lunchroom together. Occasionally someone would walk by and sneer at Jonathan, give a pitying look at Nancy that said "Oh you poor thing...", and of course the usual swoon over Steve. They tended to ignore it. Not a single person in the school knew what they had dealt with. They didn't know what they were dealing with at the moment. Steve came and picked Nancy up for a ride nearly every night, driving her through the streets until both of their eyelids were heavy. The motion of a moving vehicle always lulled Nancy to sleep, ever since she was a kid. Steve just took advantage of that knowledge now in order to help her go to bed, even if Eleven's screams of "Gone!" rang in her head as Barb disappeared in front of Nancy in her dreams.

Steve was left reeling after the events as well. Who knew that knocking a monster over with a swing of a bat would result in some form of a friendship with Jonathan Byers? After watching how he swung the bat, Nancy and Jonathan had tried to encourage him to join the baseball team. He had thought about it but decided instead to focus his time and energy on Nancy. Joining a club would only mean time away from her. Besides, his grades seemed to improve the more time he spent with her.

As for Jonathan, he never left Will's side. Will believed that he did

when it was right before bed and Jonathan had said good night but once he was certain Will was asleep, Jonathan sat outside of Will's room. He listened for any suspicious footsteps, growls, or anything similar to the monster that the boys had called the Demogorgon. Jonathan watched the lights to make sure they didn't speak; he made sure that the walls weren't being pushed against by some unspeakable force. Sometimes, for Mike Wheeler's sake, he tried to see if there was a way to contact El. Like the others, he had a feeling she was in the Upside Down. She definitely wasn't dead, they all knew that. Mike held onto that thought and reassurance as his way of making it through his days. But on quiet nights in the Byers' household, Jonathan planted himself in front of a socket in the living room, plugged in a bundle of lights that he had stored in his room, and attempted to talk to Eleven. Of all places she might be he doubted it would be his home but if she could hear someone calling to her, it might be possible to find a way to get her out. In a sense, his attempts to find her weren't just for Mike, but for Nancy as well.

Often times he caught himself staring at her, recalling the moment she had decided to push a friendship to a weird spot. He hadn't mentioned it to her at all in the couple of months in between that night and their nearing graduation. Nancy choosing to continue her relationship with Steve was enough of an answer as he needed in regards to the incident. Yet Nancy had mentioned it once in passing. A quick couple of sentences.

"Listen, that night before the monster? That whole... You know. It-it was a heat of the moment thing I think. I'm sorry."

And with that, she had carried on her way. Hadn't even given him a chance to nod in agreement even though he hated to agree. Jonathan hated seeing how happy she was with Steve but made sure to keep his mouth shut about it.

At this particular lunch, it was Jonathan who finally broke the silence. "So, uhm, I got some good news yesterday." He reached into his bag and pulled out a piece of paper, sliding it across the table and into Steve and Nancy's line of sight. They each took a minute to read it before feeling unfamiliar smiles grow on their faces.

"I knew you could do it," Nancy said. "Those photos were absolutely

beautiful. If NYU couldn't see your talent I'm not sure who could have." Jonathan gave her a small smile and shook a bit as Steve reached across the table to pat him on the shoulder. "Congrats, Byers. Can't wait to see your work in some magazines."

The bell rang and Nancy handed the letter of acceptance back to Jonathan. For a brief moment, their fingers grazed over one another. Jonathan sensed the familiar feeling of longing and suddenly loss run through him. He thanked her with a shaky smile and watched as she walked off with Steve, his arm lazily slung around her as she leaned into him. They made sense. The pretty girl with the handsome boy. The American dream in the making, destined to be completed with a white picket fence and a puppy. She couldn't have that with him. He was a Byers boy, the son of a raging alcoholic who had insinuated using his son's death as only another way of getting money to fuel his disgusting habits. Jonathan was weak, had cried over shooting a damn rabbit. He hoped NYU would push away the constant fear of becoming his father; push away Hawkins and everything with the Upside Down away all together. Jonathan worried about Will and his mother but Hopper was coming around a lot more now, taking Will out and acting like the father they had both deserved.

New York might be his best bet to move on with his life.

The gym erupted into cheers as Nancy took her graduation cap off, a beam on her face, and tossed it into the air. Jonathan removed his cap but held onto it, knowing that he had promised Will he could wear it for a couple of pictures and that if he'd tossed his hat it surely would have gotten lost. Hopefully, it would encourage Will to keep going through school even though he had been sick so often lately.

He had been impressed with how well Nancy's speech had gone. She had brought up Barb in the middle of it, causing the entire class of 1984 to fall silent. None of them had spent much time with Barb aside from Nancy but they knew who she was. They knew that she was gone although to many of them "gone" meant somewhere she had run off to, not the "gone" that had been exclaimed by Eleven. Only a couple of tears had fallen onto the sheet of paper Nancy had

placed on the podium with shaking hands, something Steve and Jonathan were incredibly proud of her for.

As everyone celebrated with their families, Jonathan snapped pictures of people celebrating. He coached his mom through how to take pictures so he and Will could have some together from his graduation. Hopper took some of the three Byers standing together and when Nancy and Steve made their way over he snapped some of the three graduates joking around. One of Steve giving Jonathan a noogie while Nancy laughs, of them all smiling and one where Steve waved to someone behind Hop, allowing Jonathan a moment to glance at Nancy, unaware that he was telling the camera everything that he felt for her. Jonathan looked at her as if he were enjoying the last days of summer, the first flakes of asnowstorum, or a breakthrough of sunshine after a thunderstorm. Jonathan needed to enjoy the moments like these because after he left for New York, he knew visits home would be few and far between. He needed to leave this life behind, start over, and graduation was just the beginning of that.

2. Reunion

*Don't let me go down this road again
We both know where this ends
In a storm of feeling, I'm so unappealing
I can't play these games*

Five Years Later

A phone call in the wee hours of the morning forced him awake. Any call past nine PM had meant bad things from his experience. The phone calls had meant a family member passing or his dad calling drunk from a bar to explain he would be staying at a buddie's house. By buddy he typically meant another woman's bed but the Byers tended to push that thought away, mainly to keep it a secret from Will. Will knew his father was terrible but Joyce and Jonathan had silently agreed to make sure Will didn't know everything. He deserved a semi-normal life, although that was easily destroyed by him being dragged into the Upside Down.

"Hello?" he answered, his voice raspy with sleep. Jonathan knew there was no way to hide that he had just woken up so he chose to just speak instead of allowing himself to clear his throat. He listened carefully and heard only short breaths on the other line. Jagged breaths, as if tears were being held back. He thought he heard a familiar voice whispering his name, a voice he hadn't heard in at least four years. "Nancy?"

"You need to come home..." she pleaded. Jonathan was shocked that she was back in Hawkins. As far as he knew she had moved to the other side of the country to go to school in California. Like him, she wanted to be as far away from Hawkins and its dreadful memories as possible. She hadn't followed Steve to college as Jonathan had expected her to. On the contrary Steve followed her. From what he'd last heard they were going strong, though this came from Will who had briefly heard it from Mike's parents.

"Nancy, what's wrong?" He had his light flicked on though and was packing his bags. Even though he was talking to someone he hadn't

spoken to in years, Jonathan's immediate jump to start packing didn't surprise him. This was Nancy after all. He wanted desperately to be over her, had thoroughly convinced himself that he was after having dated around for a while, but simply hearing her voice dragged him back in. Yet the tone of fear in her words filled him with dread. He knew as soon as he hung up the phone that he would be contacting his mother to let her know he was coming home for a while.

"Mike's gone..." Nancy whispered. "Mike's gone and I know it has something to do with Eleven and the Upside Down and--" Her voice cracked and Jonathan winced at the sound. She was ready to break and he was over seven hundred miles away, an eleven hour drive that he planned on beginning once his mother was alerted that he was headed home. "Steve won't get it. He's seen that thing but he hasn't seen that world. He wasn't there when Mike came to me crying over El. You get it Jonathan and I'm scared but we can do this together. Please..."

Jonathan zipped his bag closed, hoping she could hear it. "I'll be home tomorrow. It's going to take a while, it's a long drive, but I'm on my way. Try to get some sleep in the meantime, okay?" He paused as he waited for an answer, merely listening to her somewhat steadied breathing on the other end.

"Climb up to my room when you're here," Nancy said after what felt like hours of silence. "My parents aren't home because they're looking around like crazy for Mike and Steve is back in California but it's just an easier way to get up here." Jonathan nodded, affirming her request even though she couldn't hear him agreeing.

"Please, Jonathan. Hurry."

Jonathan chewed on his thumb nail as he drove, the windows down and music blasting. It was a beautiful spring day. No clouds to be seen and a nice breeze flowing along the endless stretch of a highway. His mind wasn't on the weather or the music though. It was on ways to save Mike. He wondered if Mike truly was in the Upside Down. It wasn't surprising that Mike had been looking for El this

whole time. Lucas and Dustin had been helping him find clues as to where Eleven might be. They asked Will how he knew how to make contact and Will could only explain that it had felt right.

"I just looked at the lights and whispered the letters out loud," Will explained. Mike was frustrated with his friend, that much was clear, and Jonathan did his best to avoid listening to the conversation all together. Will was still acting strange and excused himself often. Whenever Jonathan followed him he sounded as though he were vomiting but after the first time he had barged in, Will had remained adamant about locking the door. He was furious when Jonathan had caught him and hadn't spoken to him for a week. So for Jonathan to see Mike acting this way around his younger brother was maddening.

"El wasn't stupid," Dustin said, Mike quietly hissing a "isn't" to correct him. Dustin continued, "And she's been there. She's got to know her way around. She just needs to find her way to us somehow."

That was the last time Jonathan had heard the boys discuss the prospect of finding Eleven. Though they were in their senior year of high school now, college on the horizons for Mike, Dustin, and Lucas considering how Will's sickness had made him fall behind, the boys kept their focuses on that week in November. They wanted to forget it on the surface but deep down they wanted more answers and as they found answers they only got more questions. The main question that there was remained the same overall: Where the hell was Eleven?

Jonathan hadn't even realized he had entered Hawkins until he began to recognize the buildings around him. He noticed the old gas station and finally slowed down as he drove through the downtown district. His eyes traveled up to the movie theater sign, half expecting to see it reading "Nancy the Slut Wheeler" once more before recalling the hours Steve had put in to erasing it. Jonathan drove straight past the turn that led to his house and instead carried on until about a block before the Wheeler's residence. He parked his car and made his way over, pausing right next to their place. Nerves suddenly kicked in as he was reminded of the first night he had spent at their house up in Nancy's room. He wasn't sure if she was even up there right now or if he would come face to face with Holly playing around with her sister's belongings. Deciding that it was do or die for Mike's sake,

Jonathan took a deep breath and walked over, hoisting himself up until he was at eye level with Nancy's window. Her blinds were closed but he could see someone who sort of looked like her lying on her bed. When he gently tapped the window, she jumped, slowly turning over and then running when she realized it was him. Nancy flung open the blinds and relief flooded her face upon seeing Jonathan's. They stared at each other for a while through the window, reconnecting silently as memories rushed through both of their heads. Eventually Jonathan gave a halfhearted wave and Nancy opened her window. Ever so gracefully Jonathan tumbled in.

"Don't remember there being that much of a drop there..." he said, rubbing his head. With a small laugh, one that sounded weak as if it hadn't been formed in ages, Nancy held out her hand. Jonathan took it and as she helped him up, his eyes didn't leave the object he noticed on her finger. A beautiful diamond. An expensive one for sure. The thought about how much it could have cost took Jonathan's breath out of his lungs. "He proposed."

Nancy looked confused for a second before following Jonathan's eyes. "Oh, yeah. About two months ago. I figured Mike would have said something to Will but--."

"Congrats, Nancy," Jonathan said, a small smile on his face. Every piece of him was broken but dammit he needed her to know that he was happy for her. Her brother was missing, a feeling he could relate to all too well, and so clinging on to something happy might be just what she needed. "Knew he'd do it eventually, with California and all. Sorry I couldn't be there to capture the moment." He cursed himself silently for not being able to get a bit more humor in his voice but it didn't seem to bother Nancy in the least. Instead, she seemed to ignore his words and hugged him close to her. He felt the sobs from her shoulder movements before he could feel her tears on his neck. Jonathan wrapped his arms around her and held her tight. "We'll find him Nance. It's what we do." He hoped desperately that she believed him because he doubted his own words at this point. The Upside Down, everything with Eleven and that stupid government building, was confusing and completely unpredictable. No promises could be made, but putting lives on the line to save others was something they were willing to do.

Notes for the Chapter:

I'm hoping to update this at least weekly but bear with me please!

Author's Note:

The title of this comes from a Neck Deep song, "A Part of Me." I know it isn't 80s music but I felt like the lyrics suited this pairing really well. They'll be scattered throughout the story itself. I hope I can do Jancy some justice with this story. Enjoy!